

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 19596 302200Z

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0848

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 19596

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH RAMPHAL

1. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL SONNY RAMPHAL NOVEMBER 30. RAMPHAL HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO AFRICA AND THE PACIFIC.

2. RAMPHAL SAW KAUNDA IN LUSAKA ON NOVEMBER 9 BEFORE THE KAUNDA-NYERERE MEETING IN MBALA. THE ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT STRUCK RAMPHAL AS "LONELY" AND INCREASINGLY AWARE OF HIS OWN ISOLATION IN AFRICA AND INSIDE ZAMBIA. KAUNDA WENT OVER HIS NOW FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE DANGER OF CIVIL WAR IN RHODESIA AND THE NEED TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS IN FAVOR OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY DOMINATED BY NKOMO BUT INCLUDING SMITH. RAMPHAL SAID KAUNDA'S DISCOURSE HAD ASTONISHED HIM. HE SAID HE ARGUED BLUNTLY AGAINST THE PROPOSAL IN-

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SISTING THAT IT CAME TOO LATE IN THE PROCESS, CONTRAVENED THE ESSENCE OF COMMONWEALTH POLICY ON RHODESIA, IGNORED POLITICAL REALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN, AND WOULD INEVITABLY BE REPRESENTED AS A PLOY TO INSTALL NKOMO. RAMPHAL ALSO EXPRESSED HIS SURPRISE THAT KAUNDA COULD CONTEMPLATE ANY ROLE FOR SMITH. KAUNDA SEEMED UNMOVED BY THESE OBJECTIONS

SUGGESTING INSTEAD THAT HIS IDEAS MERELY REVERSED THE ORDER OF TWO ELEMENTS IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN AND THAT SMITH HAD APPEARED TO HIM AS SERIOUS AND SINCERE.

3. RAMPHAL SAID HE DESCRIBED THIS CONVERSATION TO DAVID OWEN TWO DAYS AGO, AND HAD ALSO SAID THAT THE US AND UK SHOULD NOT BE DETERRED BY KAUNDA'S ATTITUDE OR BY SMITH'S MOVE TO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. HE HAD WARNED OWEN THAT SILENCE NOW BY THE US AND UK WOULD SEEM TO CONDONE SMITH'S ACTION AND WOULD CONVINCE NYERERE THAT WE HAD ABANDONED OUR INITIATIVE. "YOU MUST KEEP CLOSE TO NYERERE," HE TOLD OWEN. "IF YOU LOSE NYERERE, YOU LOSE EVERYTHING."

4. RAMPHAL BELIEVES THAT NYERERE HAS FOR THE MOMENT RUN HIS COURSE IN ATTEMPTING TO CHANGE KAUNDA'S MIND. HE HAS THEREFORE WRITTEN OBASANJO TO SUGGEST HE MIGHT WEIGH IN. HE HAS ALSO SENT ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL ANYAOKU TO BRIEF OBASANJO MORE FULLY. RAMPHAL SAID HE WOULD LET US KNOW THE NIGERIAN REACTION, AND SUGGESTED WE MIGHT ALSO WANT TO TALK TO OBASANJO.

5. EMBASSY OFFICER SAID WE AGREED WITH RAMPHAL'S VIEW THAT THE US AND UK CANNOT AFFORD INACTIVITY NOW AND MUST INSTEAD PUSH AHEAD WITH OUR PROPOSALS. HE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF RAMPHAL'S OPINION

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WERE WELL KNOWN IN LONDON. BREWSTER

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